

CITY OF MUSKEGON
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

June 3, 2003

The meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Chairperson, D. Chambers.

MEMBERS PRESENT: D. Chambers, J. Hilt, L. Spataro, L. Cole, A. Medema,
T. Bosma, T. Russo

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: B. Lazor, H.Griffith, R. Grabinski, L. Grabinski

OTHERS PRESENT: B. Gillard, J. Livingston, J. Allen, M. Piper

T. Bosma arrived at 4:01 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of May 6, 2003 was made by J. Hilt, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

L. Spataro arrived at 4:04 p.m.

A motion to accept the walk-on cases was made by D. Chambers, supported by A. Medema and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS/PUBLIC HEARINGS

Case 2003-29: Request to Concur with HBA. Applicant: Robert Grabinski; 412 W. Muskegon; District: Houston; Class: A. B. Lazor presented the staff report. According to the applicant, an inspection was carried out in June of 2001 and it was found that this building is dangerous. A notice was given to repair or demolish the building in July of the same year. After the case was brought to the HBA it was tabled for 90 days to allow a timeline to be set up. Owner did not comply. The applicant supplied the dangerous building inspection report that shows the problems with the building including porch rot, fire hazards, and uncertified appliances. Applicant wishes the HDC would concur with the HBA that the structure is unsafe, substandard, a public nuisance, and dangerous building. Contributing and significant historic structures should only be demolished as a last resort after it is found that the buildings are structurally unsound and irreparable. The Director of Inspections was at the meeting to explain the decision and will answer questions.

A. Medema asked if this was the house that had been on the list for the property tax auction and was removed at the last minute. B. Grabinski stated that it was and he doesn't know why it was removed. Should the HDC concur with the HBA, then this may put enough pressure on the

property owner to do something. There is someone interested in purchasing the home for rehabilitation, who has rehabbed other homes. This may get the owner to sell the home. D. Chambers stated that he lives in this neighborhood and has seen someone enter the property a couple of times through a window. B. Grabinski stated that he is aware of this and they have boarded it several times. There have also been police reports for different instances regarding this property, (which were supplied in the commission member's packets). A. Medema asked since there is a possible purchaser, are they to concur with the HBA or table this request. B. Grabinski stated that his request is to proceed with the request to concur with the HBA. There will be a 30-day window between this meeting and when it goes before the City Commission. The buyer is aware of this. Hopefully, the property owner will sell the property before it gets to the point of demolition. L. Spataro added that by concurring with the HBA, would give the owner a push to sell the property. He would support this request.

A motion that the Historic District Commission agree with the Housing Board of Appeals and deem the structure located at 412 West Muskegon Avenue is a hazard to public health and safety pursuant to HDC guidelines, was made by A. Medema, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

Case 2003-30: Request to Repair and Alter Home. Applicant: John C. Allen; 354 W. Muskegon; District: Houston; Class: A. B. Lazor presented the staff report. Applicant has already been before the HDC for approval of moving the structure currently located at 341 Bauer. Applicant has already removed the structure located around the base of the turret in preparation for the move. (See supplied sheets for detail) In general, the applicant wishes to make numerous changes to the house. Some major changes are the moving of the front door from the turret area to the center of the house. Also windows will be added to the lower portion of the turret matching those above. A new porch will wrap around the front and the turret side. Some windows will change sizes and places (see attached description). The window on the first floor 45° corner will be replaced with a stained glass window. Applicant states that the roofing material will be a green architectural shingle and vents will be added to aid ventilation. New energy efficient wooden windows will replace old windows in the house. The boiler room will be reduced in size and turned into a 10' X 10' entryway. The turret door will be replaced by a 3'X4' window. Applicant wishes to make lower half of turret red sandstone. Finally, the area between the ground and the deck on the new front porch will be faced with the same brick as the rest of the house. This is the second house to be moved onto Muskegon Avenue with help from the Historic Home infill program. The changes being made to the house appear to be in keeping with the historic nature of the building. Changing the locations and sizes of the windows and doors will help to more efficiently use the interior space and will help the exterior look better. Staff recommends approval per submitted details. Staff reminds applicant to obtain all necessary permits and to come back before the HDC for any more exterior changes unless they can be handled under the staff approval policy.

J. Allen provided the commission members the architectural plans to look over. T. Bosma stated that he felt this should be considered as a new construction. J. Allen stated that the window behind the turret was where the original porch had been. The porch covered the window. He gave a description of the current looks of the interior. He described the fireplace and the fact that the room has doorways on every wall. The changes that he will be making are minor changes. He would like to take the door located at the turret and move it to the front and get matching windows. He would like to make the home look consistent. T. Russo stated that he had looked at purchasing the home a couple of years ago. The stairway is narrow and steep. Once you get upstairs, you are coming up through the master bedroom. L. Spataro stated that he would concur with T. Bosma that this should be considered as a new construction.

A motion that changes to the building indicated in the supplied drawing and descriptions are approved per submitted details, was made by T. Bosma, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

Walk-ons

Case 2003-31: Request to Install Electrical Panel on Rear of House and to Block the 2 Windows Behind the Electrical Panel with brick Matching the Building. Applicant: Jason Livingston; 1249 Peck Street District: McLaughlin; Class: A. B. Lazor presented information. The applicant wishes to install an electrical panel at the rear portion of the building per electrical code requirement. Staff recommends approval of the request.

J. Livingston stated that he was informed that he couldn't have this in the basement where it used to be. This spot behind the building was the least visible and seemed to be the best spot. The location of the electrical panel is also required to be a certain distance from the gas meter, which it would be. A. Medema asked if this building was being rehabbed into single family or apartments. J. Livingston stated that it would still be apartments. L. Spataro asked about there being 11 meters. J. Livingston stated that there used to be 12 apartments. The upper 2 apartments will not be used. There will then be 10 apartments and 1 of the meters will be the house meter.

A motion that the installation of the electrical panel on the rear of the building and the blocking of the 2 lower windows with matching block be approved, was made by A. Medema, supported by T. Russo and unanimously approved.

Case 2003-32: Request to Add Railing and Other Exterior Features. Applicant: Peck Properties LLC; 1121 Peck Street; District: McLaughlin; Class: A. B. Lazor presented the information. The applicant would like to install new railings on the front porch, upper porch, and side entryway. The spindles are matching. The metal sheeting was replaced over the porch in keeping with the original. This would be painted like the rest. The commission members were provided with pictures of 2 doors that were used, steps, lighting fixtures, and spindles. Staff recommends approval of the request.

B. Gillard stated that the railings would be 36 in., which would be to code. He selected spindles that would match the house. While cleaning the yard, they found where there had been a lamppost. They would like to add this to the request.

A motion that the railings, doors, steps, exterior lighting, metal sheeting, and lamppost (based on staff approval of the lamppost) be approved, was made by L. Spataro, supported by J. Hilt and unanimously approved.

L. Cole arrived at 4:26 p.m.

Case 2003-33: Request to Install Fence. Applicant: Michelle Piper DDS; 17 E Delaware; District: McLaughlin; Class: A. B. Lazor presented the information. The applicant would like to install a fence. Zoning has no problems with the placement of the fence. The applicant isn't sure if she will be using wood or vinyl fencing. Staff recommends approval of the fence.

A motion that the installation of a privacy fence with staff approving the type of fencing be approved, was made by A. Medema, supported by L. Spataro and unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

OTHER BUSINESS

Millie Ortiz – B. Lazor informed the commission members that the style of split granite that Millie had planned on using is no longer available. It could be made, but would be expensive. She researched other Queen Anne style homes and came up with an alternative and staff approved it.

Mall Update – L. Spataro provided as update regarding the plans. Muskegon Construction has dismantled and sold pieces of the mall. There will be a meeting on June 30th regarding negotiations with Charter Group for a final agreement. Charter's concept was displayed. They are looking at 200 units for housing. This would make 75 loft apartments and 125 townhouses. There would also be commercial/retail space. The parking for the residents would be in garages in the building. There is no on-site parking. They would need about 600 parking spaces for the commercial/retail buildings. They are located in the downtown overlay-parking district. They would like to save the facades of some of the historic buildings and replace the rest.

Staff Approval Policy: B. Lazor indicated that he wishes to clarify and update the staff approval policy. He wants to include architectural shingles as roofing that is considered better than what was previously on the home. Since we do not look at paint color on the house, B. Lazor indicated that roof color could be chosen by the homeowner. Also, B. Lazor wants to include landscape lighting as a staff approval. We have looked at lighting at St. Pauls Church and more lighting may be coming before the commission. The approval would be for small lights like the ones that go along a sidewalk. The commission did not have a problem including these on the staff approval policy.

Work Plan – B. Lazor stated that some of the items are in process and some are almost completed. D. Chambers asked about the design book. B. Lazor stated that the black and white copies have been completed. He is working on having some color copies made. He stated that he would be bringing portions of the ordinance to them for changes. He would bring it in sections to make it easier. Some of the items that would be looked at are satellite dishes and fences. If the commission members have any suggestions, they may contact him.

The meeting adjourned at 4:48 p.m.